

A World Where People With Disabilities Can Live with Peace of Mind

1. Motivation behind Research Paper

Are there people with disabilities around you? I am not surrounded by anyone with disabilities currently, but this was not always the case. The reason why I wanted to study more about people with disabilities was because at the elementary school I attended, I had the opportunity to interact with students from the school for the deaf once a year. While playing and studying with them, the deaf students communicated with us by reading our mouth movements and other body language. However, the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic has made it necessary for people to wear masks. We thought that the range of communication was limited due to the fact that they could not see mouth movements. As of 2022, there are about 9,647,000 people that are considered to be “disabled” in Japan. This is equivalent to about 7.6% of the population. Specifically, there are 4,360,000 people that have physical disabilities and 5,287,000 that have mental disabilities or illnesses. The graph below shows the number of persons with disabilities by age group in Japan. As the graph illustrates, the number of people with disabilities has increased over the years; one out of 35 people have disabilities currently in Japan. With relatively few young people and a large percentage of those 65 and older, the proportion of the elderly population is increasing due to the declining birthrate and ageing population. It is expected that the proportion of the elderly population will further increase in the future. I wondered if there was anything else that could be improved regardless of Covid-19, or if something that had not been inconvenient before due to Covid-19. I decided to

research the challenges disabled people face because I wanted to learn more about how I could help those who might have a harder time in life due to their “disabilities.”

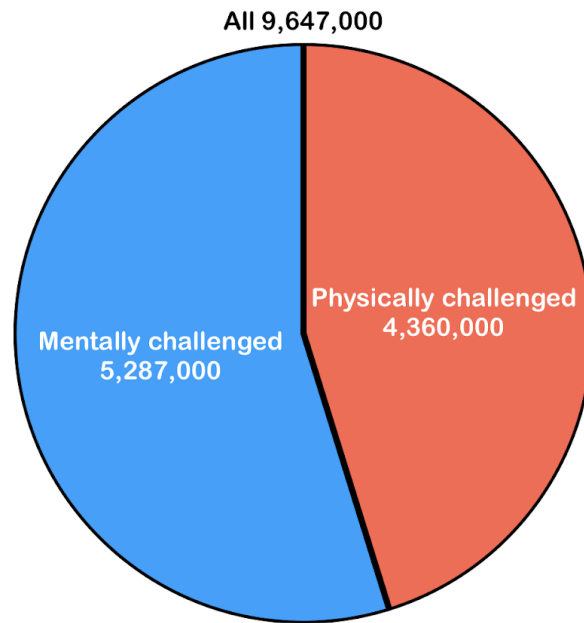
2. Introduction

According to The Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, a person with a disability is someone “who continuously suffers from considerable limitations in daily or social life due to physical, intellectual, or mental disabilities.” Using this definition, my group and I explored the different ways to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities. During our exploration, we had people wear eye masks to experience what it was like to be visually impaired. This was inspired by a TV drama where one of the characters put on an eye mask to experience the life of the main character who was blind. I decided to do this experience myself, in order to try and deeply understand the experiences of those who cannot see.

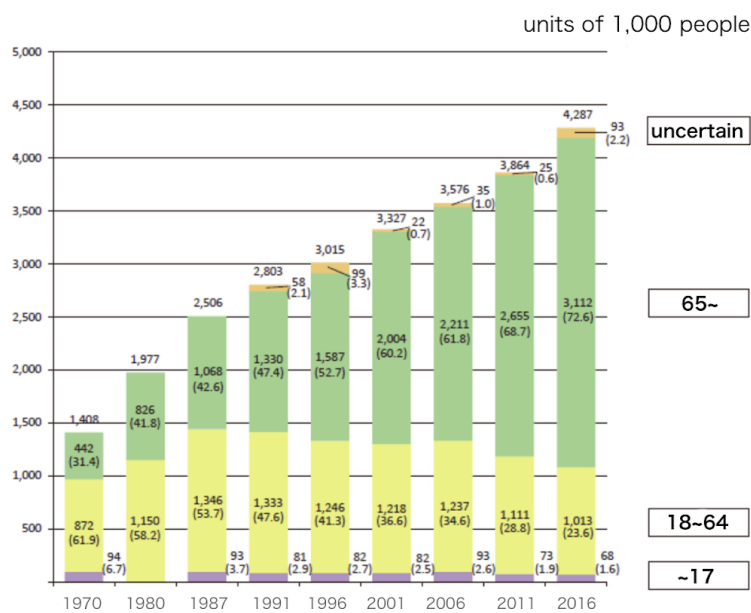
3. Results and Analysis

How many people with disabilities are there in Japan? As of 2022, there are about 9,647,000 people. This is equivalent to about 7.6% of the population.

•Physically challenged: 4,360,000 people •Mentally challenged: 5,287,000 people



The graph below shows the number of persons with disabilities by age group in Japan. The number of people with disabilities has increased over the years, there is one in 35. With relatively few young people and a large percentage of those 65 and older. The proportion of the older population is increasing due to the declining birthrate and ageing population. It is expected that the proportion of the older population will further increase in the future.



According to the "Preliminary Report of the 2006 Basic School Survey" (as of May 1) by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the number of students enrolled in 71 schools for the blind nationwide (1 national school, 68 public schools, and 2 private schools) is 3,688. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology reports that there are 3,688 students enrolled in 71 schools (1 national, 68 public, and 2 private schools) throughout Japan. The number of students enrolled in schools for the blind is reported to be 3,688. There is one school for the blind and one school for the deaf in Nara Prefecture. Both schools are located in Yamatokoriyama City, and the faculties of kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, and high school come together in one school for study. The School for the Blind has a total enrollment of 35 students, and the School for the Deaf has a total enrollment of 98 students.

-Eye Mask Experience-

By wearing an eye mask, the participants experienced the Braille blocks and stairs. (I was supported by a friend from the side, and alerted when it was dangerous).The first one was Braille blocks. The first time, I tried walking with loafers, but perhaps because the soles of my shoes were too hard, I had difficulty walking and could not recognize the unevenness and could not proceed. The second time was done with sneakers, and it was easier to walk than the first time.The next was the stairway in the school. The route started from the shoe box on the first floor and ended at their own classrooms on the third floor. The students were not sure where the steps were or what floor they were on, so they were assisted along the way and managed to get to their classrooms.

4. Conclusion and Future Problems

What I felt after the eye mask experience was that it was very difficult to walk alone and very scary. I felt that if there was an obstacle on the Braille block, there would be no "road" for them. People who have no restrictions in their lives may think that they can just "avoid" the road. However, they are in danger if they do not go that way. It is very dangerous to place a bicycle on a Braille block, sit on it, or stand on it. If you see someone with a bicycle on the block, or someone stuck on it, please clear the obstacle or talk to them within reason, so that we can make the city a place where everyone thinks of everyone else.

5. Reflection

Through this exploration project, I was able to understand what life is like for the visually impaired and what the blind world is like. Although, I think that what I have understood is only a small part of what I have learned, I would like to apply what I have learned in this exploration in my future life.

Next, I would like to deepen my understanding of people with hearing and physical disabilities by learning sign language, conversing with them, and experiencing wheelchair use.

6. Work Cited

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